

lose funding because these workers have lost their jobs and because this plant has closed, what it does to our country as a whole when we have this kind of trade deficit. We understand that. That is why those of us opposed to the Central American Free Trade Agreement want to throw out this dysfunctional cousin of NAFTA and want to negotiate a trade agreement that will lift workers up in Central America, while promoting prosperity here at home.

There is no reason that our trade agreements need to look like this, need to have a result like this. Instead, Congress can move forward in passing a fair trade agreement.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DELAY), the Majority Leader, the most powerful Republican in the U.S. Congress, and the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS) both promised to vote on the Central American Free Trade Agreement by the end of May.

Now, if you will look at this chart you will see that the end of May happens to be the 1-year anniversary of when CAFTA was sent to Congress. So, Mr. Speaker, we should vote no on the Central American Free Trade Agreement; bury this trade agreement, and pass a trade agreement that is good for American workers and American communities.

SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, last year President Bush put Social Security reform on the national agenda. His proposal to save Social Security by giving younger Americans the choice to choose personal savings accounts has been met, to date, by ridicule and silence by the loyal opposition in this Congress. The ridicule has taken a variety of forms, denouncing the President's motives and intentions. The intentions of Republicans have been described by some outside organizations as an effort to tear down the house of public retirement in America.

Beyond that slur, there has just been, to date, simply silence. No ideas, no counterproposals, nothing to deal with what many refer to as a generational tsunami heading for Social Security, as some 40 million Americans over the age of 65 within 20 years will become 80 million Americans over the age of 65.

I say silence with hesitation, Mr. Speaker, because that actually ended yesterday among the loyal opposition when the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER) introduced his legislation at a press event in his home State, where he unveiled a bill which he described as Social Security forever, saying, admirably, "I believe it is time for Democrats to offer an alternative to the President."

And to the gentleman from Florida, I say with admiration, I could not agree more. I admire him for his leadership on behalf of his vision of government and also his honesty as he proposes to cure what ails Social Security in the next 50 to 75 years with that anecdote that Democrats run to most often, and that is, namely, higher taxes. The Wexler bill, with a 6 percent tax increase on income over \$90,000 a year would be the largest marginal tax rate increase in a generation.

Let us be clear about this, Mr. Speaker. House conservatives will vigorously oppose any effort to finance Social Security reform by raising taxes on working families, small businesses, and family farms. Thanks to the Wexler proposal, the American people now see a very clear choice before them, the President and the Republican Congress's vision for reform and the single Democrat vision that has been articulated, higher taxes. With one of the largest marginal tax increases in a generation, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER's) Social Security forever bill looks more like higher taxes forever.

It is time for this Congress to move on to the substance of Social Security reform. Let us offer our conflicting visions in this chamber across the aisle and move forward to save and secure and reform Social Security for our children and our grandchildren.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 10 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Michigan) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer: Lord, Your word is founded in truth and Your just decrees are everlasting.

So our fleeting days and our passing tasks are truly significant only if they are grounded in You.

Eternal God, You are the wellspring of creativity for Your people. You are forever liberating us from blinding evil; so be with Congress today.

Ennoble every compromise rooted in compassion; and strengthen every commitment measured by righteous decisions in this body.

Just as there cannot be true worship in Your sight without sacrifice and conversion of heart; nor can there be true politics without principle. Free us,

Lord, to amend our ways so that we will search for what is truly right and just; lest we become lost in endless possibilities born only from self-centered imagination.

Lord God, in the land of the free we hold ourselves accountable to You both now and forever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. SOLIS led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SPEND IT WISELY

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DELAY. Madam Speaker, this week the House will uphold, for the 216th time, its constitutionally mandated responsibility to begin the process of funding the Federal Government.

The Founding Fathers understood the power of the purse and that that power of the purse was government's most potent, and therefore installed that power first and foremost in the body most accountable to the American people, the House of Representatives.

In the 10 years Republicans have controlled the House appropriations process, we have fundamentally changed the way we spend the people's money.

We have based this process on an entirely new question: no longer "How much can we spend?" but "How much should we spend?" That may seem like a very small matter, but it has saved our government and our economy billions of dollars and millions of jobs over the last decade.

The fiscal accountability our Republican majority instituted helped balance the budget in the late 1990s, helped ensure the recession of 2001 was the shallowest in memory, and helped ensure our recovery from that recession and the 9/11 attacks was strong and durable.

This week we will begin our second decade protecting the American people's money, and our first year with our streamlined Committee on Appropriations, by taking up the first two spending bills for the 2006 fiscal year.

First, the homeland security spending bill will provide the resources our

homeland security agencies need to do their work. And since September 11, 2001, Congress has worked tirelessly with the administration to identify and address our national vulnerabilities, culminating with the creation of the new Department of Homeland Security.

The fiscal year 2006 security appropriation will meet the needs of our first responders, make it harder for terrorists and criminals to pierce our borders, better prepare our Nation for emergencies, and help us stay one step ahead of our enemies.

Second, we will provide for the 2006 budgets for the Department of the Interior and environment-related agencies.

It makes sense these two bills will be the first we take up. After all, our homeland security agencies protect our people and our infrastructure while our interior agencies protect everything in between.

For these and the rest of the fiscal year 2006 spending bills, Madam Speaker, the House will lead the way not only chronologically but responsibly. We will continue to build on the record we have established these last 10 years, making sure every dollar is put to its best use and making sure we only spend those dollars we must.

For another appropriation season is upon us and we will spend it wisely.

CALLING FOR U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I would like to read to the Members from excerpts from an op-ed that the gentleman from Hawaii (Mr. ABERCROMBIE) and I published in "USA Today."

"The military occupation of Iraq will not turn Iraq into a democratic nation. Longstanding rivalries will do more to shape that country's future. Those forces will not be controlled by American boots on the ground no matter how many we put there or how long they remain.

"In Iraq there are no front lines, no easy way to tell friend from foe, no clear way to measure success. Iraq is a quagmire. It has become a recruiting post for Osama bin Laden. Are we to keep fighting indefinitely, losing more troops every week, spending billions of dollars, and increasing the strain on our Armed Forces, especially the Reserve and the National Guard?

"Iraq has already added \$200 billion to our national debt and costs U.S. taxpayers more than \$1 billion per month. It jeopardizes the strategic interests of the United States. It alienates allies in the Muslim world, and it is hindering efforts to create a united global front against al Qaeda.

"Unlike World War II, where the enemy surrendered and the troops came home, there is no such prospect in Iraq. We must define an endpoint. We will soon introduce legislation to

achieve that goal by bringing the occupation of Iraq to a close. The troops have done their jobs. It is up to Congress and the President to forge a policy worthy of their sacrifices."

HONORING GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON GOODPASTER

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Madam Speaker, I attended West Point from 1976 to 1980. The Academy was going through much change dealing with a cheating scandal and the integration of the first women at West Point.

To effect change, the Army turned to a world renowned retired four star general, Andrew Jackson Goodpaster, a West Point graduate.

General Goodpaster, from Granite City, Illinois, led Army troops in World War II, Vietnam, and oversaw NATO and U.S. troops in Europe in the 1970s. General Goodpaster served at various times as an aid to Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon.

General Goodpaster died yesterday at the age of 90 here in D.C. at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy; two daughters, Susan and Anne; and seven grandchildren.

As their alma mater states: "And when our work is done, our course on earth is done, may it be said well done, be thou at peace."

Well done, Supe. Be thou at peace.

SAVINGS INCENTIVES

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, as we continue debating the future of Social Security, it is important to remember for more Americans they cannot save enough for their retirement.

In fact, over half of all Americans do not participate in employer-sponsored retirement plans, and for 28 million households in America they have no other retirement security outside of Social Security.

For America's families retirements are less, not more secure. United Airline employees last week learned that painful lesson.

For that reason it is crucial that we strengthen, not weaken, Social Security, as well as enable more Americans to save for their retirement.

Specifically, step one, we should encourage companies to automatically enroll their employees in their 401(k) plans. At R.R. Donnelley, a Chicago company, auto enrollment dramatically increased 401(k) participation when they did automatic participation, up to 92 percent.

Second, we should make the Saver's Credit fully refundable and permanent. A recent H&R Block study shows, when offered a matching contribution, Americans save more.

Third, we should allow taxpayers to directly deposit their tax refund into a savings account.

And, fourth, finally, we should create universal 401(k)s for all Americans to consolidate the different savings plans that exist.

MEDIA NEEDS TO SHOW RESPONSIBILITY IN REPORTING

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, "Newsweek" last night finally retracted a story that had deadly consequences. The incident underscores how high the stakes are for the news media. There is a prestige for organizations to get the story first. But that prestige often trumps factual reporting of issues. And the "gotcha" factor is often the motivation for running stories that are not as well researched as they could or should be. It is the "gotcha" bias that leads to shoddy reporting. This may be fine when they are covering the Michael Jackson case.

The problem with the War on Terror reporting is that terrorists are watching. When stories are reported here that fit their PR plan, terrorists use them to incite violence and hatred around the world. In the very next news cycle, their response can be heard. That means that mistakes are very costly and the damage done is outrageous.

In this case "Newsweek's" mistake cost the lives of 17 people in riots in Afghanistan and set back the cause of democracy there. This is inexcusable and irresponsible. And while it is good that Newsweek issued a correction, they should lead the way in setting a higher standard of reporting in the first place, particularly when we are talking life and death, war and peace.

ABUSE OF POWER

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to denounce the Republican attack on our system of checks and balances that has existed in our country for well over 200 years.

Led by the Senate majority leader, the Senate Republicans are creating an unnecessary showdown over judicial nominations that will hurt the American public and especially women.

The truth is that since President Bush took office, the Senate has confirmed 208 of his judicial nominations and turned back only 10, which is a 95 percent confirmation rate.

There are reasons the Democrats are concerned about the judicial nominations. As Chair of the Democratic Women's Working Group, I am concerned about the nominations of Janice Rogers Brown and Priscilla Owen to the circuit court seats. Both these